

## Electrocardiograph (EKG) Technicians

ELECTROCARDIOGRAPH (EKG) TECHNICIANS operate and maintain EKG machines. An EKG machine detects and records the electronic impulses transmitted by the heart during and between heartbeats. When patients are suspected of having heart disease, a physician may refer them to an EKG Technician for testing.

EKG Technicians begin the testing procedure by relaxing the patient. The test is usually performed with the patient lying upon an examination table. Sometimes, a physician may order a stress EKG that requires the patient to walk on a treadmill while heart activity is recorded. In either case, the Technician attaches from 3 to 12 electrodes (also called leads) to the patient's chest, arms, and legs. The Technician then starts the machine that begins recording wave tracings on a roll of paper. Occasionally, the Technician relocates the electrodes, notes the replacement on the EKG tracing, and begins the recording again. After the test is completed, the Technician may mark sections of the report that the physician should review. Technicians with advanced training also perform Holter monitor and stress testing.

### *Requirements*

- ▲ High School diploma and scholastic background in the physical sciences and biology.
- ▲ Most EKG technicians are trained on the job. Hospitals and clinics usually offer three to six month basic training programs. Completion of a one-year certificate-training program is preferred by some employers.
- ▲ Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training is helpful.
- ▲ Mechanical aptitude to properly set up the EKG machine.
- ▲ Ability to follow detailed instructions and remain calm during an emergency.
- ▲ Fingerprint clearance may be required by employer.

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### Wages

- ▲ Electrocardiograph (EKG) Technicians  
Median hourly wage: \$23.14
- ▲ Average annual wage: \$50,077

*Source: Occupational Employment Survey of Employers 2006 by EDD/LMID. These wages represent the broad occupational group Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians that includes EKG Technicians.*

### Job Outlook

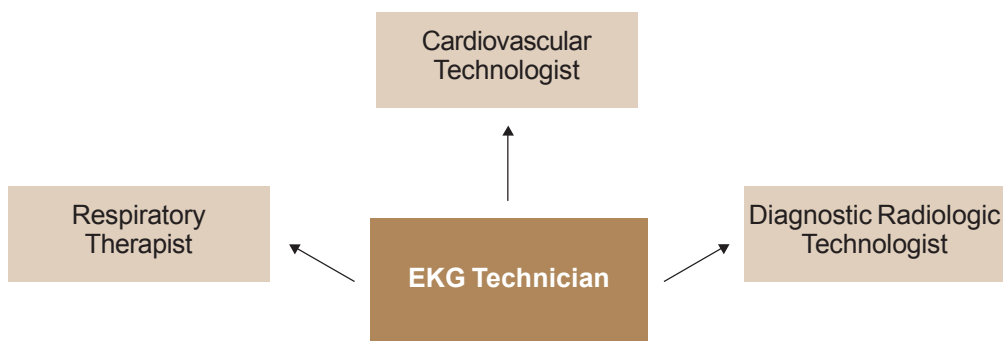
- ▲ Estimated number of EKG Technicians in 2004: 2,900
- ▲ Estimated number of EKG Technicians in 2014: 3,500
- ▲ Estimated annual job openings: 110

*Source: Occupational Projections, EDD/LMID.*

### Sources of Information

- ▲ Alliance of Cardiovascular Professionals  
(804) 632-0078  
[www.acp-online.org](http://www.acp-online.org)
- ▲ *California Occupational Guide*, No. 538  
Electrocardiograph (EKG) Technicians

### Possible Career Paths



*The skills, knowledge, and abilities acquired for the primary occupation provide a solid foundation for further growth in health career occupations. Additional education or training is often required.*